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Message Text

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43
ACTION HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OES-05 FSE-00 ABF-01 /023 W
---------- 043625
R 041005Z JUN 75
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9241

UNCLAS TUNIS 3342

PASS HEW/SRS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS:TPHY, OSCI, TS
SUBJ: DHEW/SRS/SFCP - SRS RESEARCH PROJECT ON
COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES UNIT FOR TREATMENT AND
REHABILITATION OF RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE
PATIENTS

REF: STATE 117966, TUNIS 3712 (JUNE 27, 1973)

1. EMBOFF HAS DISCUSSED SUBJECT PROJECT WITH DOCTORS BEN HAMIDA AND BEN ISMAIL AS REQUESTED STATE 117966. COPY OF 1973 LETTER FROM BEN ISMAIL TO GARRETT OF HEW BEING AIR-POUCHED. COPIES OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ALSO BEING SENT. IN ANY CASE, PROJECT HAS CHANGED SO MUCH AS TO REQUIRE NEW MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IF HEW PROCEEDS WITH PROJECT.

2. AS HEW IS AWARE, ORIGINAL PROJECT CONCEPTION CALLED FOR TUNISIAN FUNDING OF CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT FOR CARDIAC DISEASES CENTER WITH U.S. FUNDING OF SALARIES FOR PERSONNEL. MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH DISAPPROVED PROJECT ON GROUND THAT U.S. AND TUNISIAN ROLES SHOULD BE REVERSED. THIS EXPLAINED IN DETAIL IN BEN ISMAIL'S LETTER WHICH PROPOSED BUDGET FOR CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT OF TD200,000. GOT HAS NOW AGREED TO FUND CONSTRUCTION OF CENTER PLUS SALARIES OF PERSONNEL BUT DOCTORS BEN HAMIDA AND BEN ISMAIL DESIRE HEW FUNDING FOR EQUIPMENT, WHICH THEY NOW ESTIMATE MAY COST TD250,000.
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3. BEN HAMIDA AND BEN ISMAIL ASKED THAT SEVERAL POINTS BE EMPHASIZED TO HEW: A) CENTER WILL BE FOR BOTH REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH ON CARDIO-VASCULAR DISEASES; B) IF HEW WILLING FUND EQUIPMENT COST, PURCHASES MUST BE PRIMARILY FOR NON-US EQUIPMENT. THIS NECESSARY BECAUSE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROBLEM, REQUIRING PURCHASE OF EUROPEAN-MADE EQUIPMENT ALREADY IN TUNISIA, AND BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS OF SPARE PARTS AND MAINTENANCE; C) THEY WISH THAT USG SEND NOTE TO MINISTRY OF HEALTH INDICATING ITS INTEREST IN SPONSORING THE PROJECT AND ASKING FOR SPECIFIC TUNISIAN PROPOSALS.

4. EMBOFF CAUTIONED BEN HAMIDA AND BEN ISMAIL THAT PROPOSED FIGURE OF TD250,000 ALMOST CERTAINLY BEYOND HEW'S CAPABILITIES, TO WHICH BEN HAMIDA REPLIED THAT THEY WERE PROPOSING THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT NEEDED BUT WOULD CLEARLY SETTLE FOR LESS. IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTION CONCERNING POSSIBILITY OF OBLIGATING FY 75 FUNDS FOR PROJECT, AS INDICATED STATE 117966, BOTH DOCTORS INDICATED THAT SUCH TIME URGENCY NOT, RPT NOT, REQUIRED. BEN ISMAIL HOPES BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF CENTER IN 3 TO 4 MONTHS. HOWEVER, LENGTHY CONSTRUCTION TIMES TYPICAL HERE MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT CENTER WILL BE READY FOR EQUIPPING IN NEAR FUTURE. EMBOFF CONFIRMED THAT SITE FOR CENTER HAS NOT, RPT NOT, BEEN CLEARED AND THAT WHILE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS ARE COMPLETE, FINAL BLUEPRINTS NOT YET PREPARED.

5. IN RESPONSE QUESTION, BEN HAMIDA AND BEN ISMAIL CONFIRMED THAT CONSTRUCTION OF CENTER NOT, RPT NOT, DEPENDETN UPON HEW FUNDING OF EQUIPMENT. THEY DID NOT, RPT NOT, INDICATE OTHER POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING BUT IN GENERAL SEEMED HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC (IN EMBOFF'S VIEW ALMOST NAIVE) CONCERNING FUTURE OF PROJECT.

6. IN PARTING, EMBOFF AGREED TO TRANSMIT SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATION TO HEW BUT CAUTIONED BEN HAMIDA AND BEN ISMAIL THAT HEW WOULD PROBABLY WANT CONSIDERABLY MORE DETAIL AND NEW PROJECT PLAN
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AND BUDGET. THEY AGREED TO PROVIDE THESE IF HEW SO REQUESTS.

7. COMMENT: WHILE HEW WILL HAVE TO PASS ON SCIENTIFIC USES OF AVAILABLE FUNDS, EMBASSY WOULD BE RELUCTANT SEE U.S.-OWNED DINARS USED TO FINANCE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT NOT, RPT NOT, OF U.S. ORIGIN AT TIME WHEN WE ARE TRYING INCREASE OUR EXPORTS OF SUCH EQUIPMENT

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TO TUNISIA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, RESEARCH, MEDICAL CARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TUNIS03342
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750195-0063
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750680/aaaacuyf.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION HEW
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 117966, 75 TUNIS 3712, 75 (JUNE 27, 75 197
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2003 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <29 JAN 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

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EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DHEW/SRS/SFCP - SRS RESEARCH PROJECT ON COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES UNIT FOR TREATMENT AND
TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006